a company of actors and actresses brought together by the manager of a provincial theatre to support a leading actor or actress—"a star"—from London. When Edmund Kean, the Kembles, Macready, or Mrs. Siddons visited provincial towns, these companies were ready to support them in Shakespeare. They were also ready to play burlesque, farce, and comedy to fill out the bill. Sometimes the " stars " would come for a whole season ; if their magnitude were of the first order, for only one night. Sometimes they would rehearse with the stock company, sometimes they wouldn't. There is a story of a manager visiting Edmund Kean at his hotel on his arrival in a small provincial town, and asking the great actor when he would rehearse.

" Rehearse ! I'm not going to rehearse—I'm going to sleep!"

" Have you any instructions ? "

" Instructions ! No ! Tell 'em to keep at a long arm's length away from me and do their d d worst! "

At Bristol, where I joined Mr. J. H. Chute's stock company in 1861, we had no experience of that kind, perhaps because there was no Kean alive to give it to us. And I don't think that our "worst" would have been so very bad. Mr. Chute, who had married Macready's half-sister, was a splendid manager, and he contrived to gather round him a company which was something more than " sound:"

Several of its members distinguished themselves greatly in after years. Among these I may mention Miss Marie Wilton (now Lady Bancroft) and Miss Madge

Robertson
(now Mrs. Kendal).

Lady Bancroft had left the company before I joined it, but Mrs. Kendal was there, and so was Miss Henrietta
Hodson (afterwards Mrs. Labouchere). I was much